



Construct Validity of Race and its Impact on the Quality of Research and Evaluation

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Preface

- We are not experts, we are students
- We want to acknowledge some of the lenses we have been socialized into, we are White, middle class, able bodied, straight, females, with advanced degrees, and training in anti-racism.
- We are here to learn from all of you.
- Acknowledge inspired by Dr. Pauline Brooks workshop at the 2009 AEA in Orlando, FL


Outline

- Abstract/Purpose
- Why should we care?
- Methodology
- Construct of Race
- Racism Today
- Impact of Traditional Constructs
- Next Steps

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- **Abstract/Purpose**
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Abstract/Purpose

- Construct validity of race traditionally thought to be based on:
 - Genetics
 - Demography
 - Physical Characteristics } FALSE
- Impact on Research and Evaluation:
 - Reinforce Racial Stereotypes and Discrimination
 - Reduce the Validity of Findings
- Race is a *social construct* and needs to be treated as such.
- Purpose: Examine implications of utilizing invalid constructs of race within research and evaluation.
- Identify ways practice needs to be modified when race is viewed as a *social construct* and how these modifications can improve the quality of research and evaluation.

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Why Should We Care?

“...Racism is so systematic and pervasive in American social research that a study of its history should be a required part of the training of all evaluators and social researchers, and racist behavior should not be considered simply as an aberration of a few misguided individuals”
(House, 1999, p. 434).



Why Race?



-ISM's

Although there are many ism's that people face in the US, we live in a race based society.

Methods and discussion points that apply to race also apply to other ism's

Why Should We Care?



We are researchers, academics, and teachers:

- Trusted source for information generation and dissemination
 - With that role comes RESPONSIBILITY:
 - To ensure our findings are as accurate as possible
 - To do no harm

Evaluator = Position of Power

Determining merit or worth automatically puts evaluators in a position of power.

Evaluator decides:

- Who's voice is heard?
- What data is collected?
- Who's values and world view is used to analyses and determine results?



Program Evaluation Standards

Standards of our field support similar concepts.

For example:

Utility

- **U4 Explicit Values:** Evaluations should clarify and specify the individual and cultural values underpinning purposes, processes, and judgments

Propriety

- **P3 Human Rights & Respect:** Evaluations should be designed and conducted to protect human and legal rights and maintain the dignity of participants and other stakeholders.

Program Evaluation Standards

Accuracy

- **A1 Justified Conclusions & Decisions:** Evaluation conclusions and decisions should be explicitly justified in the cultures and contexts where they have consequences.
- **A2 Valid Information:** Evaluation information should serve the intended purposes and support valid interpretations.
- **A8 Communication & Reporting:** Evaluation communications should have adequate scope and guard against misconceptions, biases, distortions, and errors.

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Methodology

Content Analysis (In progress)

- Conducting extensive literature search on race and:
 - Research
 - Evaluation
 - Sociology
 - Anthropology
 - Medicine



- Accountability to anti-racist community.

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History: Science in the 1800's

"Science" was used to "prove" the inferiority of certain races

- Morton: Measured skulls attempt to "prove" there were differences among the races in terms of brain size and different species.
- Linnaeus & Blumenbach: Introduced race-based classifications.
 - Linnaeus base classification on geography & proposed 4 sub-categories of Homo Sapiens.
 - Blumenbach later base it on physical appearance.

History: US Slavery

US slavery was unique in that most slaves were not able to work off their “debts”.

- 1793: Cotton gin increased the need for enslaved people.
 - 1790 = 697,897 enslaved people
 - 1810 = 1.2 million enslaved people
- Generational wealth was created as a result when the cotton industry grew over a 10 year period from a \$150,000 crop to a \$8 million crop.



History: 1900's

Science was used to measure various physical and mental characteristics in order to "prove" the superiority of whites and the inferiority of people of color.

- Biased IQ Tests

Tests were used to shaped US immigration policy and race based segregation.



History: 1900's

Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment

- Began in 1932
- Cure established in 1947
- No participants were treated for syphilis during the study
- Ended in 1972
- All subjects were African American men

History - Who has power?

In the US, who has traditionally had the power to...

- Live free
- Own land
- Vote
- Establish laws
- Read
- Accumulate generational wealth

This power has and continues to influence our research and evaluation methods.

What is a construct?



“A concept, model, or schematic idea”

(Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002).

Three constructs of race have been used historically:

- Genetics
- Demography
- Physical Characteristics

**All are FALSE,
based on flawed “science”**

Genetics Construct

Race is based on blood lines, genetics, and/or DNA.

False: There is more genetic variation within “racial groups” than between groups

(Marks, 1994)



Demography Construct



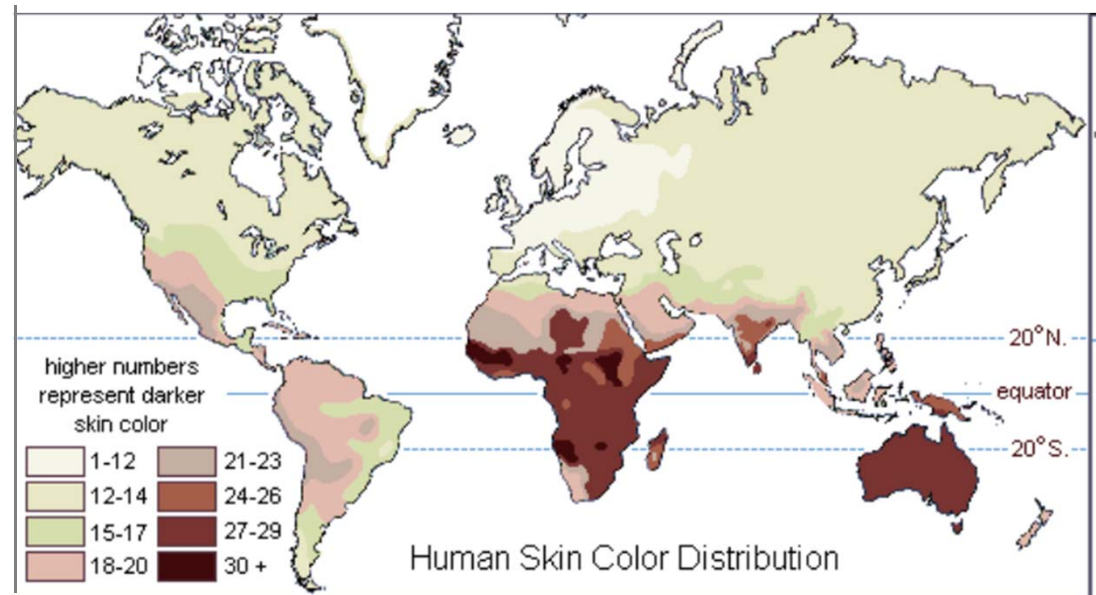
Race is based on ancestral geographic origin.

False: Physical traits thought to cluster in certain locations in which a “race” is considered to exist are more broadly distributed than is typically thought. (Mukhopadhyay, Henze, & Moses, 2007)

Demography Construct

For example, people With dark brown skin were/are found in Africa, Asia, Australia, New Guinea, and the Americas.

Epicanthic folds thought only to be present in the “Asian race” is also a physical feature of the Khoisan/Bushmen of southern Africa. (Shreeve, 1994).



Data From Before 1940—Retrieved from: http://anthro.palomar.edu/vary/vary_1.htm

Physical Characteristics Construct



Race is based on observable traits.

False: Traits are not discrete but continuous, causing researchers and/or politicians to arbitrarily decide a point of distinction on a continuum.

Physical Characteristics Construct

Where is the cut off for White, Black, Hispanic, etc.?

	1	10			19	28	
	2	11			20	29	
	3	12			21	30	
	4	13			22	31	
	5	14			23	32	
	6	15			24	33	
	7	16			25	34	
	8	17			26	35	
	9	18			27	36	

Physical Characteristics Construct

Can you tell someone's race by looking at them?



We suggest participating in similar exercise: Race – The Power of an Illusion
http://www.pbs.org/race/002_SortingPeople/002_00-home.htm

What is a Social Construct?

Definition: A human created concept that develops a set of norms or beliefs used by a collective group. (Tikaki, 1993; Boas, 1940; and Frankenberg, 1993)

Race categories were created by people and evolved along with changes in politics, culture, and events.

Race is not a measureable feature, but people have used the idea of race to socialize all of us into a system of power and privilege for some and disadvantage for others. This socialization process leaves us with false truths that must be unpacked and analyzed in order to change our practices and thus change the system.

What is a Social Construct?

Society creates ways to sort people:

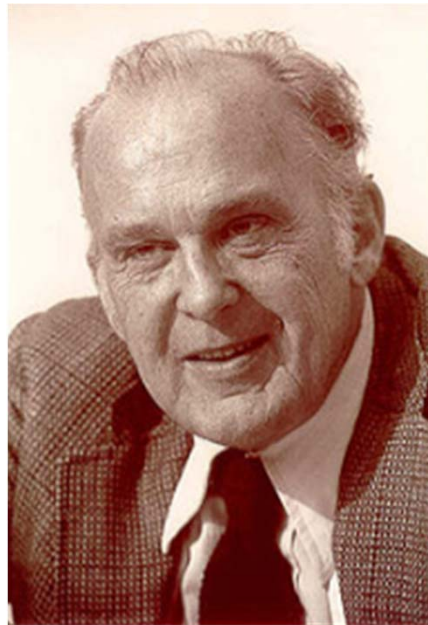
- Male/Female
- Short/Tall
- Fat/Thin
- Straight/LGBTQ
- Boss/Employee
- Rich/Middle Class/Poor

These classifications help create our world view.

Is there a hierarchy to these labels?

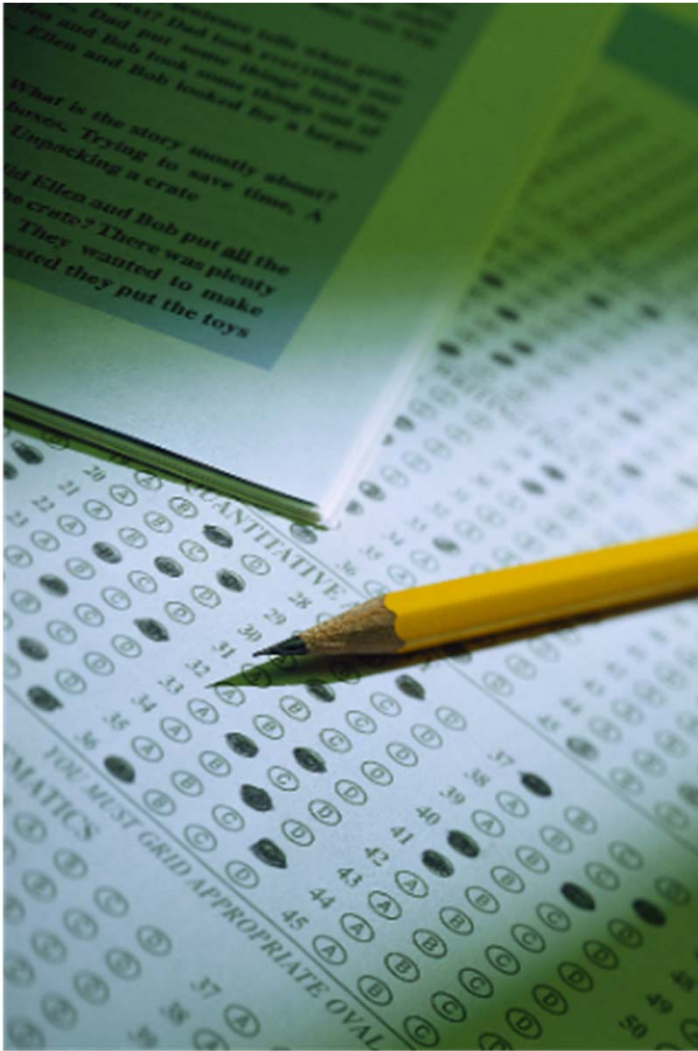
Construct Validity of Race

Campbell & Fiske (1959)



- Convergent Validity
- Discriminate Validity

Construct Validity of Race



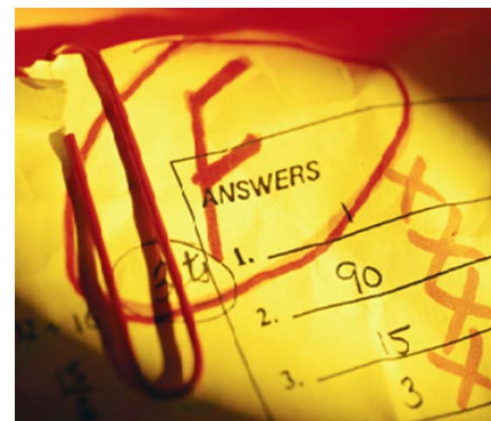
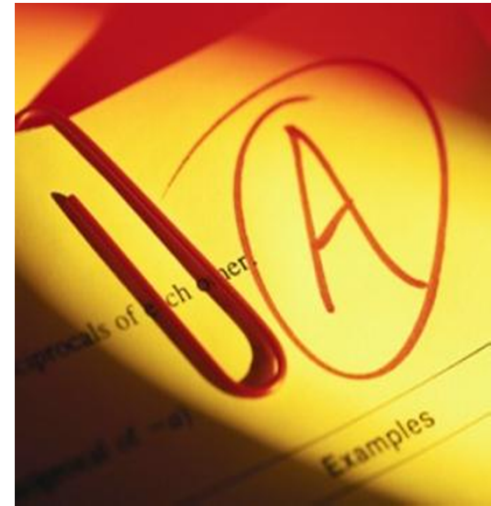
Convergent Validity: Two measures of the same thing should correlate with one another.

Example: Would a participant self report match the racial classification made by researcher during an observation?

Construct Validity of Race

Discriminate Validity: Two measures of different things should not correlate with one another.

For example, race often covaries with education, income, property ownership, etc.



Constructs of Race

- Racial stratification is real
- Race is not biologically real
- Race is a *social construct*
- *We are all socialized into a system of privilege and disadvantage based on perceived differences in race.*

Race as a Social Construct

Still important to examine differences based on race, treating race as a social construct, to determine the effects of racial prejudice in terms of well-being & socioeconomic status.

This creates a situation that uses a flawed construct of race in order to remedy historical wrongs.

Constructs of Race

Racial classification is interpreted and used to promote privilege and disadvantage.

=**Racism** which leads to differences in power and access to resources.



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Racism in the United States

1. Racism in the U.S. was shaped by European colonialism - looking for land, gold, and resources
2. Racism in the U.S. was influenced by denial, justification and dehumanization
3. Scarcity vs. Abundance - the idea that only superior (Europeans) deserve the resources
4. Characterization of Indians as inhuman was extended to include other non-European groups such as Africans, Asians, and Latinos (non-white, People of Color)
5. Racism in the U.S. was/is institutionalized. It affects access to resources necessary for life.

Crossroads Antiracism Training and Organizing

Racism Today

Race prejudice
+
The misuse of power
by systems and institutions
=
Racism



Racism Today



- Purpose of systems/institutions/structures: create manage, and distribute the resources necessary for daily life
- Provide a means for people to act in such as way as to preserve (institutionalize) and perpetuate collective action.

Racism Today: Wealth



- In poverty:
 - 24% of Blacks
 - 21% of Latinos
 - 8% of Whites.
- (www.usforallofus.org/stats-facts)
- White families have more than twice the wealth of African American families even when they make the same income; much of this gap is due to home equity and family inheritance.

(www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-background-03011htm)

Racism Today: Housing

- The estimated total loss of wealth for people of color is between \$164 - \$213 billion for subprime loans taken during the past 8 years.



- This represents the greatest loss of wealth for people of color in modern US history.

(www.faireconomy.org/news/subprime_lending_causes_greatest_loss_of_welath_for_people_of_color_in_modern_history)

Racism Today: Health



African American infants in the US are more than twice as likely as white infants to die in the first year of life. (Kerner Report, 2008)

Be Part of the Solution

The people mover takes you from point A to point B whether you stand, walk, or run. Similarly, our societal structures and systems are set up to continue a system of advantage. We must reorient the system in order to have a different outcome.



(Tatum, 2007)

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Traditional Constructs of Validity...

(1) Reinforces racial stereotypes and discrimination



(2) Reduces the validity of findings



Suggestions for Appropriate Use



Traditional Constructs of Validity...

(1) Reinforces racial stereotypes and discrimination



(2) Reduces the validity of findings



1. Reinforces Racial Stereotypes and Discrimination

(a) Traditional Research Practices



(b) Failure to address structural and systemic nature of racism



1. Reinforces Racial Stereotypes and Discrimination

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(b) Failure to address structural and systemic nature of racism



(a) Traditional Research/Evaluation Practices

While we recommend having a multiracial research/evaluation team, it should be noted that it does not automatically remove racial bias.



(a) Traditional Research/Evaluation Practices

Stakeholders should benefit from the research/evaluation and not just be exploited for their informational riches.

The majority of academics/evaluators are white and often take information from individuals of color to build up their careers while individuals in these communities see no to little benefit from their work.



(Stanfield, 1999 and Brooks, 2009)

(a) Traditional Research/Evaluation Practices

Common Concerns in Communities of Color

(paraphrased AEA workshop created by Dr. Pauline Brooks)

- How will you establish trust with communities of color?
- Are the voices of communities of color represented in the planning of the evaluation?
- Historically authorities/institutions evaluators represent have contributed to the creation & maintenance of racism; so why are you interested now? How do you plan to avoid bringing racism into the evaluation?
- How can communities of color be assured evaluation will benefit their community? What measures has the evaluation team taken to ensure this?

(a) Traditional Research/Evaluation Practices

- How does the evaluation contribute to the eradication of racism?
- How is modern day racism working against the promotion of equity within the evaluation? What have you done to address this?
- How do we know your efforts to measure racism are legitimate and that you do not have false motives?
- How do we know that the evaluation will not lead to more racial oppression?

(a) Traditional Research/Evaluation Practices

- Asset-focused indicators should be utilized.
 - Example: % of households with “sufficient” incomes to raise children (e.g. above poverty level) vs. % of children living in poverty
- Language should be chosen carefully.
 - Example: Struggling families vs. poor families.
Struggling families implies families are working hard and that there are obstacles. Poor families implies that more money will solve the problem.

(Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2008)

(a) Traditional Research/Evaluation Practices

- Data regarding race/ethnicity should be reported throughout the report and not be segregated into a “special section”
- Data should be consistently disaggregated by race/ethnicity
- Presentation of data should not promote stereotypes (e.g., do not use pictures which promote stereotypes).



(Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2008)

(a) Traditional Research/Evaluation Practices

- Limitations of using race, a social construct, should be noted.



(a) Traditional Research/Evaluation Practices

- Measurement instruments and indicators should be examined and evaluated for cultural biases.
 - Example: Math test that includes complex word problems may actually be measuring reading comprehension, especially for second language learners.
- Racial disparities should be examined even when “race” is not the focus because racial classifications often influence access to power and resources.

1. Reinforces Racial Stereotypes and Discrimination

(a) Traditional Research Practices



(b) Failure to address structural and systemic nature of racism



(b) Failure to Address Structural and Systemic Nature of Racism

- The researcher should know the structural/systemic nature of the topic before beginning the research process. Some guiding questions include:
 - Do current disparities exist by race/ethnicity around this issue or closely related one?
 - How did they get that way?
 - If disparities exist, how will they be affected by this policy/program/practice?

(Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2008)

(b) Failure to Address Structural and Systemic Nature of Racism

- Results should be examined in terms of a structural and systemic context to avoid promoting stereotypes; also include structural and systemic data to promote program improvement.
 - Example: If find health disparity pair with information on access, health insurance, and other information from your research. Need to take approach from beginning.

(Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2008)

(b) Failure to Address Structural and Systemic Nature of Racism

- If significant racial disparities are discovered within your data then you should research potential structural/systemic explanations.
 - Example: Children's test scores, parental income, and parental education
 - Help reader focus on policy and program change that can be made
 - Individualizing can lead readers to think individual behavior is an explanation of the problem or blame group stereotypes

(Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2008)

(b) Failure to Address Structural and Systemic Nature of Racism

Brooks Equity Typology (BET)

- Tool to help promote social equality
 - Cross discipline
 - Used initial screening & in-depth
- Developed based on:
 - Multidisciplinary and international definitions of racism
 - 33 cross-disciplinary manifestations/forms of racism (e.g., institutional, dyconscious, procedural, etc.)
 - Histories of 5 different racial communities in US

(b) Failure to Address Structural and Systemic Nature of Racism

Brooks Equity Typology (BET)

- 9 Typology:
 - Power & Authority
 - Rules
 - Actions/Emotions
 - Ideology/Thinking
 - Systems and Institutions
 - Environment
 - Physical
 - Social
 - Developmental/Lifespan Human Development
 - Resources and Services
 - Legacy/Historical Accumulations

(b) Failure to Address Structural and Systemic Nature of Racism

Annie E. Casey Foundation Race Matters Series/More Race Matters

- Race Equity Impact Analysis (Tool)
- System Reform Strategies (Tool)
- Community Building Strategies (Tool)
- Organizational Self-Assessment (Tool)
- Advancing Better Outcomes for All Children: Reporting Data Using a Racial Equity Lens.

Racial Equity Tools Website

- <http://www.racialequitytools.org/al-assessproc.htm>

(b) Failure to Address Structural and Systemic Nature of Racism

- Caution should be used when choosing structural indicators; poor indicators can overlook structural disparities.
 - Example: Poverty line established politically not actually based on what a family needs to meet basic needs.

Traditional Constructs of Validity...

(1) Reinforces racial stereotypes and discrimination



(2) Reduces the validity of findings



2. Reduce the Validity of Findings

- Self-reporting classifications of race should be used versus observation, & detailed instructions should be provided on how subjects should categorize themselves.
 - Consideration should be given to the fact that individuals may classify themselves as different races when completing paperwork for different purposes (e.g., financial aid, or country club memberships form).
- "Study found in the early 1970s, 34% of people participating in a census survey in two consecutive years changed racial groups from one year to the next" (Shreeve, 1994, pg 58)



Picture from Race Exhibit

2. Reduce the Validity of Findings

- Instruments should be pilot tested to verify that the categories and instructions make sense to members of the target population.
- Racial categories should be chosen carefully; consider the implications this may have on your research.
 - For example, provide category Asian or Native Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese, Thai, Korean, etc.

2. Reduce the Validity of Findings

- Caution should be used when comparing findings across time and sources.
 - Investigate history of measures you are using.

Census 1970

Until the 1970 census, racial classification was determined by census enumerators and not self reported (Anderson and Fienberg, 1999).

4. COLOR OR RACE

Fill one circle.

If "Indian (American)," also give tribe.

If "Other," also give race.

<input type="radio"/> White	<input type="radio"/> Japanese	<input type="radio"/> Hawaiian
<input type="radio"/> Negro or Black	<input type="radio"/> Chinese	<input type="radio"/> Korean
<input type="radio"/> Indian (Amer.)	<input type="radio"/> Filipino	<input type="radio"/> Other— <i>Print race</i>

☒ *Print tribe* →

Census 1990

7. Is this person of Spanish/Hispanic origin?

Fill ONE circle for each person.

If Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic,
print one group. _____

- ☐ No (not Spanish/Hispanic)
- ☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican-Am., Chicano
- ☐ Yes, Puerto Rican
- ☐ Yes, Cuban
- ☐ Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic
(Print one group, for example: Argentinean,
Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan,
Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.)

4. Race

Fill ONE circle for the race that the person
considers himself/herself to be.

If Indian (Amer.), print the name of
the enrolled or principal tribe. _____


If Other Asian or Pacific Islander (API)
print one group, for example: Hmong,
Fijian, Laotian, Thai, Tongan, Pakistani,
Cambodian, and so on. _____

If Other race, print race. _____

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black or Negro
- ☐ Indian (Amer.) (Print the name of the
enrolled or principal tribe.)
- ☐ Eskimo
- ☐ Aleut
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Filipino
- ☐ Hawaiian
- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Vietnamese
- ☐ Japanese
- ☐ Asian Indian
- ☐ Samoan
- ☐ Guamanian
- ☐ Other API
- ☐ Other race (Print race)

Census 2010

5. Is this person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- ☐ **No**, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- ☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- ☐ Yes, Puerto Rican
- ☐ Yes, Cuban
- ☐ Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — *Print origin, for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.* 

6. What is this person's race? Mark ☒ one or more boxes.

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black, African Am., or Negro
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native — *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.*

[illegible]

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean | <input type="checkbox"/> Guamanian or Chamorro |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> Samoan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian — <i>Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.</i> ↴ | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander — <i>Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.</i> ↴ |

[illegible]

- Some other race — *Print race.*

[illegible]

Death Rates

- “Law dictates that race of the deceased person is recorded on every death certificate.
- The task of filling out the death certificate, including the individual's race, usually falls to the mortician.
- Often a person's recorded race changes between his or her birth certificate and death certificate"

(Race Exhibit, 2010)



2. Reduce the Validity of Findings

- Racial experiences should not be assumed to be universal; experiences vary based on class, economic status, education, etc.



2. Reduce the Validity of Findings

- Race should not be used as a causal variable (independent variable) because race is a social construct, not a direct cause (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008).
 - Contributes to notion that race is a fixed characteristic.
 - *Example:* Providing test scores and race is not enough due to preexisting stereotypes implicitly it is being presented as causal.

2. Reduce the Validity of Findings

- Race should not be used as a proxy for education, income, even though they may be correlated in some situations. Emphasize...correlation not causation...and vs. versa and chose other variables not race. (Davis, 1992).
- Before attributing an outcome to race/racial discrimination, first try to control for other variables.
 - If racial differences still exist, it is likely there is a difference related to race.
 - Indicators are not attributable to race when indicators are distributed proportionately across demographic groups.

2. Reduce the Validity of Findings

- Identify what it really is you want to measure...
 - Nationality
 - Place of birth
 - Ethnicity
 - English second language
 - Race identified by individuals vs. race identified by others

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Next Steps for Researchers/Evaluators

- Educate yourself about race, racism, & other –isms that challenge the validity & quality of research & evaluation.
 - Race Exhibit, www.understandingrace.org
 - PBS Race – The Power of an Illusion Website/Video
 - This is a eval specific site:
<http://www.racialequitytools.org/al-assessproc.htm>
 - Annie E. Casey Foundation Race Matters Materials:
*Especially Advancing Better Outcomes for all Children:
Reporting Data Using a Racial Equity Lens.*
 - Book: White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology
 - Crossroads Anti-Racism Training and Organizing
www.crossroadsantiracism.org

Next Steps for Researchers/Evaluators

- Seek out advice & communicate with others who share different viewpoints &/or life experiences.
- Exercise self-reflection to become more aware of your position & power in society & personal biases.
- Alter your own research/evaluation practices.
- Be a good consumer of research; analyze existing racial data with a critical eye.
- In the peer review process, raise questions & identify limitations related to race as a social construct.

Reflection Sheet

- Reflection Sheet – Examples
- Feedback – we would like to hear from you
 - How have you seen the construct of race used in evaluation?
 - What are the next steps for the field of evaluation?
 - What else should we be thinking about?
 - What have you done to educate yourself?

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